

**HEALTHCARE  
LEADERSHIP  
COUNCIL**

June 7, 2002

The Honorable William M. Thomas  
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means  
2208 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Thomas: *Bill*

Difficult challenges require strong leadership, and the members of the Healthcare Leadership Council enthusiastically applaud the leadership you have shown in trying to build a better Medicare program. Your efforts to provide Medicare beneficiaries with access to comprehensive health benefits – including life-enhancing medicines – will hopefully lead to better, healthier lives for millions of senior citizens.

As chief executives of the America's leading health care companies and institutions, the members of the HLC stand ready to support your initiative to build a better Medicare. Our members have adopted sound principles on the issue of a Medicare drug benefit. We believe such a benefit must (1) offer seniors a variety of private market options to obtain outpatient prescription drugs, (2) rely upon market-based management techniques rather than government price controls to restrain costs, and (3) facilitate, rather than impede, comprehensive Medicare reform.

Based upon the summaries we have seen, your legislation is consistent with these principles. We believe strongly that the direction you are forging will lead to an affordable, high-quality drug benefit for Medicare beneficiaries, without the adverse effect on pharmaceutical research and development that would inevitably result if government has a heavy hand in affecting drug prices.

The HLC also believes it is vitally important to stabilize the current Medicare program so that future reforms will be erected on a strong foundation. Those who provide health care to Medicare beneficiaries have, for some time now, found it financially difficult to do so. The provider payment provisions in your legislation will have a positive impact on the choice, access and quality afforded to Medicare beneficiaries.

Again, we commend and thank you for your leadership in improving the Medicare program and the beneficiaries it serves. Members of the Healthcare Leadership Council look forward to working with you to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

*Mary*  
Mary R. Grealy  
President

*Bill, Our CEO members are  
looking forward to meeting with  
you on Thursday morning.*  
Healthcare Leadership Council  
900 17th Street, N.W., Suite 600  
Washington, D.C. 20006

202/452-8700 • 202/296-9561 • [www.hlc.org](http://www.hlc.org)

*Best regards,  
Mary*